WE'RE BACK IN BUSINESS

Biluchaung Hydropower Station returns to full energy output

THE 54-year-old Biluchaung Hydropower Station in Kayah State is back in operation, restoring its original strength of generating 168 megawatts following completion of its all-round rehabilitation project.

The hydropower station celebrated the partial completion of the first stage in which three machines were rehabilitated last year in February under the all-round rehabilitation project with the use of 6.6 billion yen of Japan’s grant aid.

The first stage of rehabilitation project included maintenance and replacement of turbines, generators, penstocks and 52 related parts.

Following completion of the second stage for rehabilitation of remaining three machines began at the start of the previous rainy season, all six machines with installed capacity of 28 megawatts each have now been rehabilitated.

Myanmar has a total of 5,235 megawatts of electricity from hydropower plants, natural gas-fired power plants, diesel-fired power plants and coal-fired power plants in 2015-2016, up 1822 megawatts from 3413 megawatts in 2010-2011 over the past five years, seeing 34 per cent electric power coverage across the country.

Research on ancient Pyu sites to continue despite end of excavations

ARCHAEOLOGICAL excavations of three ancient Pyu cities will officially come to a halt this month with the end of the current 2015-16 fiscal year, but a branch of the World Heritage Department has made it known that research on the sites will continue.

The ancient city of Hanlin, located in the Sagaing Region township of Wetlet; the ancient city of Beikthano, located in the Magwe Region township of Taung Twin Gyi; and the ancient city of Sri Ksetra, located in the Bago Region township of Pyay, are among the most prominent remnants of the ancient Pyu civilization.

Discoveries have been made in each of the archaeological sites since excavation activities began in February this year. These finds include palace walls and entrances in Hanlin and Sri Ksetra, while religious edifices of Pyu cultural significance were discovered in the vicinity of the royal lake within the site of Beikthano.

U Than Zaw Oo, director of the Myanmar branch of the World Heritage Department, said these findings will be presented to the Ministry of Culture.

“Buildings that are believed to have been used for religious events and rituals were unearthed near the royal lake within the ancient Beikthano city. We will conduct research as to whether [the buildings] show evidence or proof of Pyu cultural heritage,” he said.

See page 3 >>
Malfuunctioning generator causes blaze in Kyunsu Township, leaves one dead

A MALFUNCTIONING generator caused a fire in Taunggyi village in Kyunsu Township, Taninthayi Region, destroying 59 houses and claiming one life on Tuesday.

More than 50 auxiliary firefighters and villagers responded to fire at a house owned by U Ar Zi where a malfunctioning generator is believed to have caused the fire.

The fire was brought under control at about 12.30 pm. The village’s only access to water is 35 miles away in Kyunsu Township. — Yan Naung (Kyunsu IPRD)

IDP camp closed in Kyaukme

A CAMP opened at Wailuwun monastery in Kyaukme Township was closed as internally-displaced persons who were forced to flee clashes returned home, according to local sources.

Though one was closed, 20 camps remain in the township, accommodating 2,725 people as of Tuesday.

We need financial assistance to continue to help those people,” said U Tin Win, chair of the township supporting committee.

The internally-displaced persons are from Tot Huon and Mong Ngot villages, 40-mile away from Kyaukme.

The supporting committee said that people who returned home were provided with K10,000 each and rice while K30,000 is set to be offered to each monk.

According to a local from Kyaukme, most IDPs want to go back home as the tea harvests begins but dare not go home with uncertainty as to the situation. — Aung Thant Khaing

Yangon factory owners charged with violation of labour laws

A TOTAL of 41 businessmen were charged with violation of labour laws between January 2015 and January 2016, according to the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

U Win Shein, director general of the Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department, said his department and the Department of Labour Relations have charged factory owners with violation of labour laws and failures to comply with orders of the Dispute Settlement Arbitration Council.

According to the department, a maximum fine of K1 million (US$808) has been set for violating labour laws, and 16 cases remain undecided.

U Aung Lin, a member of a labour rights group, said the fine is not effective. “We welcome the ministry’s action against violators, but the penalty is not as effective as they think. We would like to see violators receive fines and prison sentences.” Owners of garment factories and shoe factories in Yangon’s industrial zones are among those who are charged with violation of labour laws. — Thein Ko Lwin

MMU graduates win Royal Haskoning DHV’s internship award

NETHERLANDS-based Royal HaskoningDHV presented internship awards to two graduates from Port & Harbour Engineering Department of Myanmar Maritime University on 29 February.

The internship award presentation ceremony was held at the university, attended by the country manager of company, rector, pro-rector and heads of departments of the university.

It was the third time for Myanmar students to win the company’s internship award. Since 2014, the Myanmar students have been awarded internship to receive training at Maritime and Waterway Department of the company in Vietnam for six months.

Ma Kyawt Kay Khine and Ma Hnin Oo Wai were winners of internship awards for 2014-2015 academic year. Royal Haskoning-DHV, an international consulting and engineering company, established its presence in Myanmar in 1986, with the release of a report on sustainability and effective utilization of Ayeyawady River.

Its branch office was opened as of January, 2014, with an appointment of a country manager, engineers and staffs.

Scout Camp open at Mt-Popa

THE opening of the fourth scout camp was held at Mt-Popa in Kyauktada Township, Mandalay Region yesterday.

In his opening address, Chief Minister U Ye Myint called on scouts to strive to become good and able citizens, keeping the motto of “Once a scout, always a scout” in mind.

During their stay at the 4th scout camp at Mt-Popa, 48 teachers, 438 boy and girl scouts from basic education schools and 62 young scouts from colleges and universities will be given lectures and scouting activities. — Myanmar News Agency

Local residents call for removal of landmines in Kutkai

RESIDENTS of Hopone Village, located in Kutkai Township, northern Shan State, have demanded that the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Defence Services), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Taang National Liberation Army (TNLA) remove landmines planted in their vicinity.

An official letter of request was sent on 25 February by local residents calling for the removal of landmines planted around Hopone Village in the aftermath of armed conflict that broke out in the area between the Tatmadaw, the KIA and the TNLA in January 2016.

“We fled the lighting that erupted near our village. My husband stepped on a landmine on 13 February while out searching for banana plant trunks. Both of his legs were blown off before he passed away on the way to the Muse hospital,” said Daw Gyar Taung of Hopone village.

Over 400 hundred people live in Hopone Village, which is made up of 43 households, but many have moved to neighbouring areas because of the village’s proximity to landmines. In addition to the release of the demand for the removal of the landmines, educational awareness on the dangers of landmines is currently being offered to local residents, said Aik Zat Aung, director of the Human Rights and Legal Department.

Conflict between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups has been flaring up near Hopone Village since 2014. — Myitmakha News Agency

Korean jumps to death off Ocean Centre

A Korean jumped to his death off the tenth floor of the Ocean Centre building in Mayangon township, Yangon Region, yesterday, local police said.

Mr Kim Hye Gun, 35, a company open at Room No.10/09 in the building, with police saying that he entered the country on a business visa, whose life was from 20 January to 30 March.

Police investigation revealed that he left a will written in Korean. — Zawgyi (Pannah)
President U Thein Sein felicitates Bulgarian counterpart

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Boyko Borisov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria, which falls on 3 March 2016.—Myanmar News Agency

President felicitates Bulgarian PM

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Daniel Mitov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria, which falls on 3 March 2016.—Myanmar News Agency

FM felicitates Bulgarian counterpart

U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Rosen Plevneliev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria, which falls on 3 March 2016.—Myanmar News Agency

Research on ancient Pyu sites to continue despite end of excavations

“Archaeologists surveyed the area using maps drawn up during the British colonial period in 1940, using the maps as guides for where to excavate. But the maps weren’t able to reveal everything. The locations of the palace walls could only be realised using modern, technological equipment,” added U Than Zaw Oo.

The excavations have been carried out as part of a five-year cultural heritage plan that began in 2014 and will run until 2018.—Myitmakha News Agency

Union Minister meets US ambassador to Myanmar

HOME Affairs Union Minister Lt-Gen Ko Ko met Mr Derek Mitchell, Ambassador of the United States to Myanmar, at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed ways to enhance greater cooperation in the future as part of improving bilateral relations.—Myanmar News Agency

Biluchaung Hydropower Station returns...

According to sources, all townships in Kayah State have electricity. The last Maese Township was electrified as of 2015-2016 FY.

During this fiscal year, electricity has reached 41 of 114 villages while works are underway to electrify the remaining 73 villages in Kayah State where 142 of 511 villages enjoy electricity.

According to the Ministry of Electric Power, the number of villages with access to electricity will total 256 at the end of this fiscal year in the state which is expected to see 90 per cent electric power coverage in the years to come.—Than Oot (Lay-myathmar)

SG Min Aung Hlaing meets outgoing US Ambassador

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defense Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received the United States Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Derek Mitchell who had completed his tour of duty of the country at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall of Yangon Regional Command yesterday.

During the call, further cooperation in bilateral relations between the two armed forces was discussed.

Also present were Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Khun Aung Myint who is also Acting Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Lt-Gen Tin Aung Sun, Lt-Gen Mya Tun Oo of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office, US Defense Attaché Colonel James McAden and officials.—Myanvady

River dredging operation in Katha Township slated for completion by this March

THE current dredging operation to return proper flow to the Ayeyawady River near Katha Township is slated for completion at the end of this month, according to Water Resources Utilisations Department in Mandalay.

The department has been dredging sandbanks in the river to ensure the safe mooring of vessels at Katha jetty since last month, said U Toe Aung Lin, assistant director of the department.

According to the department, it is set to take one month for completion of dredging operations expected to cost K70 million.

Upon completion, there will be swift flow of commodities via waterway which is the cheapest mode of transport in the region, said a local merchant in Katha Township.—Aung Thant Khaing

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The aforementioned excavation activities have been carried out since February with a government budget of K80 million, provided through the Ministry of Culture. Archaeologists are now working to date the findings.

From 2014 to 2016, a total of 40 ancient mounds were unearthed at the site of the Hanlin ancient city, and 50 were excavated at Beikhano. A total of 63 digs have been conducted at Sri Kestra.

Authorities are making efforts for proper flow in the Ayeyawady River.

Photo: Aung Thant Khaing

>> From page 1

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Fire destroys seven houses in Taninthayi

A FIRE destroyed seven houses in Nyaung Pin Kwin (Eastern) village, Taninthayi township, Myeik District on Tuesday.

According to an investigation, Ma Wai Zin Nwe (Grade 10) was cooking when the fire broke out. The fire was brought under control after 40 minutes by firemen with the help of neighbours.

The police have filed charges against her father U Kyaw Naing, 42.—Nan Thar Yee-Htein Win (IPRD)

Fire destroys a house in Thaton

A FIRE destroyed a house in Yetwinphyu village, Thaton township, Mon state on Tuesday. According to an investigation, the fire broke out in the home of one U Nyi Nyi Htway.

The fire was put out by firemen with the assistance of neighbours.

The police have filed charges against U Nyi Nyi Htway.—Khon (Win Pa)

Methamphetamine and ammunition seized in Myawaddy

AUTHORITIES seized methamphetamine and ammunition from a house on Padamyar road, ward 5, Myawaddy town. Acting on a tip off, a combined investigation team comprising officers and staff from the Myanmar Police Force were searching the house owned by Saw Than Zaw Oo, 32 where they found a 9mm pistol, a number of bullets, a knife, 20 grams of methamphetamine and a vehicle.

When interrogated, Saw Than Zaw Oo said that he had bought the methamphetamine from one Daw Nan Myint Sein, 40. Members of the police searched the house of Daw Nan Myint Sein and found 387 yabba pills, a gun and 2.5grams of methamphetamine. Police have filed charges against them under the anti-Narcotic and psychotropic substances law.—Tin Win Hlain (Kawkareik)

Fire destroys over 100 houses in Hpyauk Seikkon village

A FIRE devoured over 100 houses in Hpyauk Seikkon village, Taungdwingyi township, Magway on 29 February. According to an investigation the fire broke out when U Min Min, 29, left his kitchen fire unattended. The fire was put out by firemen with 25 fire engines and the help of neighbours. The police have filed charges against U Min Min.—MMAL (085)

Yabba and heroin seized

AN anti-drug squad seized yabba at a house in Paung Sein village, Hpa-an township, on 28 February. Acting on a tip-off, the police searched a house owned by ojne Ma Nauk Tha and found 168 yabba pills. Police further arrested one Ma Akha Lein alias Nan Ma Kyi alias Ma Kyi, who was selling the drugs.

Similarly, members of the police discovered 7.5 grams of heroin, 238 yabba pills from one Aik Yee and Aik Nyi near Ngun In village, Nan Kham township. Police have filed charges against them under the Anti-Narcotic Law.—Myanmar Police Force

�ACES have filed charges against a man on suspicion of motorcycle theft as he failed to produce documents proving that the bike he was stopped on belonged to him.

When interrogated, Phyo Thura, 19 admitted to stealing it at the corner of 35 and 89 streets, near Sidaw Hein teashop, Mandalay on 28 February. The local police have filed charges against him.—Ko Ye

Crime NEWS

Explosive device found near railway station

A TIMEBOMB was found by U Aung Win and U Htay Win, gate-keepers of the Hsipaw railway station near mileposts 508/13-14 in Hsipaw, Shan State (North) on 29 February as they cleared bush. Officials from the Township General Administration Department, the Fire Services Department, Myanmar Railways and the police arrived at the scene to remove the explosive.

They handed over the bomb to a local Garrison Engineering Battalion. According to a police investigation, the bomb was PVC, 8 inches in diameter and 5 inches in length, connected to a 9 volt battery. —Sai (Thi Paw)

Fire destroys a house in Kanbalu

A FIRE destroyed a house in ward 1, Kanbalu town, Sagaing region on Tuesday. According to an investigation, the fire broke out when U Chaw, 31, offered candle lights to Buddha in his home. The fire was put out by firemen with the assistance of neighbours. The police station has filed charges against Daw Minn Thaw, 33 the hostess.—Aung Win Nyein (Kanbalu)
A K40 million project for the construction of an incinerator in the Rakhine State township of Kyauk Phyu, to easily dispose of waste by method of combustion, is on the verge of completion.

“Construction is nearly finished. We’re just waiting on the principal piece of machinery, which has arrived in Yangon after being ordered from abroad. We will begin a trial run of the machinery once it arrives with us on 28 February,” said U Maung Aung, chair of the North Star charity group.

Construction of the aforementioned incinerator began under the supervision of the North Star charity group at the start of January last year in the vicinity of the Kyauk Phyu cemetery, according to the charity.

The average daily amount of waste emitted within the perimeters of the municipality, of between 1.5 and 2 tonnes, will be collected and incinerated by the Kyauk Phyu municipal development committee, they have made it known.

“The town of [Kyauk Phyu] is made up of ten wards. Rubbish tax is only paid in some wards. Waste discarded in those wards that rubbish trucks don’t frequent stains the dignity of the town and uglifies it’s appearance. Now, all the rubbish can be taken to the incinerator and set ablaze,” said a government civil servant of the Kyauk Phyu development committee.

Although the town of Kyauk Phyu is recognised as Rakhine State’s second capital, narrow streets and a lack of maintenance or restoration efforts has caused difficulties for rubbish collection trucks to navigate all parts of the town, resulting in some wards of the town being left out, contributing towards the unregulated disposal of waste, according to local residents.—Myitmakha News Agency

China Three Gorges Corporation signed MoA for first wind power project in Myanmar

THE China Three Gorges Corporation signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for the development of Chaungtha Wind Farm Project in Ayeyawady Region with Ministry of Electric Power of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw recently.

The MoA signing ceremony on 29th February was hosted by U Khin Maung Soe, Union Minister for Electric Power, Mr Lu Guojun, Assistant President of China Three Gorges Corporation and Chairman of China Three Gorges Corporation and Chairman of China Three Gorges International Corporation, and U Aye Hsan, Director General of Department of Electric Power Planning represented both parties and signed the MOA.

Representatives of the Chinese Embassy of the Republic of Union of Myanmar and main senior officials of the Ministry of Electric Power of Myanmar attended and witnessed the signing ceremony.

The Chaungtha Wind Farm Project is the first wind power project promoted by the Myanmar government, which has been recommended by the Chinese and Myanmar governments to be the demonstration project for electric power cooperation between China and Myanmar.

The project is located in the Pathein area of Ayayawady Region with the installed capacity of 30 MW for the first batch of development. The project will enrich energy organisation in Myanmar and partly solve the electricity demand of local residents.

In August of 2012 the China Three Gorges Corporation invested and signed a MoU for the development of wind power projects in Chin State, Rakhine State, Ayeyawady Region and Yangon Region with the Ministry of Electric Power.

Thereafter the China Three Gorges Corporation completed preliminary planning report of wind power projects in the above four states and feasibility study report of Chaungtha Wind Farm Project. The China Three Gorges Corporation obtained prior development rights in the above four states, among which Chaungtha Win Farm Project is the first invested project.—GNLM

Myanmar, Thailand discuss promotion of electricity supply

A DELEGATION led by Thailand’s Energy Minister General Anantaporn Kanjanarat arrived in Yangon yesterday to attend a bilateral meeting on electric power.

Union Minister U Khin Maung Soe accompanied Thailand’s delegation at the Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation in the afternoon of the same day.

At the call, the union minister spoke of the Mongtong hydro-power project to be jointly conducted by Myanmar, Thailand and China, stressing that the project should come under discussion at the bilateral meeting.

The two ministers discussed the enhancement of electricity supply and the effective use of water resources for power projects.

At the same venue, a meeting occurred between Thailand’s Permanent Secretary of Energy Dr Areepong Phucha-um and Myanmar’s Permanent Secretary of Electric Power U Htein Lwin. The meeting focused on action plans for the implementation of policies agreed at the ministerial-level meeting.—Myanmar News Agency

LUKOIL launches products in Myanmar

THE Russia-based LUKOIL oil company will begin selling lubricants in Myanmar this month. The lubricants will be imported via Dubai.

The LUKOIL company has appointed Dubai-based Commodity Connect, a sister company of Bay Line Shipping, as their official Myanmar sales agent, which will take care of the importation of the lubricants from Dubai.

“We’ve studied the automotive and industrial market here in Myanmar. Dependent upon the market, our brand could bring about between a 5 and 10 percent increase in sales to the market,” said LUKOIL sales director Joginder Singh Dahiya.

LUKOIL lubricants for buses, motorcycles, diesel engines, hydraulics, sea-water pumps, industrial machines, turbines and breaks will be distributed in Myanmar after the imports begin.

LUKOIL will apply a 15 percent discount to all purchases of LUKOIL products during the initial phase of distribution, according to the company’s market distributor. LUKOIL is one of the world’s largest vertically-integrated oil and gas companies. In 2013, its turnover was over US$140 billion, and has 150,000 employees globally, with over 6,500 service stations, exploration and marketing activities in over 40 countries around the world.

Aside from LUKOIL, only one lubricant brand is officially available in Myanmar—the Thailand-based PTT company. However, according to the engine lubricants market, the market also includes a number of unofficial lubricants which make their way into the country across its land borders.—Myitmakha News Agency

Myanmar records trade deficit for four years in succession

A TRADE deficit has been reported in Myanmar for four years in succession as the value of exports fell more than the value of imports, according to an official from the Ministry of Commerce.

“Necessary measures are being taken as strategy implementation in the export sector is needed for export promotion,” said the director, pointing out the impact of volatility of export prices and declining exports from the country’s private sector.

According to the ministry, there has been a drop of $1.3 billion in exports from 2012 to 2016, and a total of $10 billion over the four years in succession.

Myanmar imported $76,630.436 worth of goods until this January while only exporting $87,686,972, running a deficit of US$4901.464 million for the fiscal year 2015-2016.

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A Chinese delegation from the Ministry of Electric Power and the effective use of water resources for power projects.

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Myanmar’s Yangon Stock Exchange to start trading this month

A security stands at the Yangon Stock Exchange center during the opening ceremony of the Yangon Stock Exchange in Yangon, Myanmar, on 9 December 2015. Myanmar’s first-ever stock exchange began operation in Yangon on Wednesday with six local listed companies and Myanmar investors initially selected to act as players in the stock exchange market. PHOTO: Xinhua

YANGON — Securities trading on Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) may start in the 3rd week of this month, said Maung Maung Thein, President of Myanmar’s Securities and Exchange Commission (SECM) yesterday.

YSX was launched last December with 6 listed companies, 2 securities companies and 1 fund settlement bank, although it has not been ready for trading. Over the last two months, SECM gave securities licenses for 3 more companies and in the 3rd week of this month, YSX will start its trading process with 1 listed company which already prepared for that operation and 5 securities companies, Maung Maung Thein told Xinhua in a telephone interview. He made no disclosure on which listed company will start up the operation, adding that other listed companies will join the trading process, subject to their readiness. YSX is in preparation for the process of ICT system for its trading platform, Maung Maung Thein revealed. KBZ Bank, Myanmar’s biggest local bank, will serve as the fund settlement bank. Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Limited voiced readiness to participate in the initial trading period of YSX, President of MTSH U Win Aung also told Xinhua. Under an agreement signed on 23 December 2014, YSX is owned by Tokyo Stock Exchange and Daïwa Securities Group by 49 per cent, while the state-owned Myanmar Economic Bank (MEB) 51 percent. If YSX’s presence is at large stage, foreign investors will be allowed to invest, according to SECM.—Xinhua

Bangladesh customs seizes 1000 bank cards amid recent ATM fraud

DHAKA — Customs officials at Bangladesh’s main airport in capital Dhaka yesterday seized 1,000 bank cards from a luggage. Senior Customs official Riyadul Islam told journalists that the luggage was flown from Bangladesh’s Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka came from Wednesday at the airport’s Cargo Village.

“We have searched the luggage and found 1,000 ATM cards,” he said, adding that they are trying to ascertain where the luggage reaching the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka came from.

No one was arrested in connection with the seizure of the ATM cards.

The seizure of the cards from the unclaimed luggage came about a week after four people including a foreigner, who has been confirmed as a German national, allegedly involved in an ATM skimming scam have been arrested in Dhaka.

Some 36 subscriber have found their money was stolen from their bank accounts by the skimming card gang since January. Footage captured in the closed-circuit television cameras of ATM booths showed a man who appeared to be a white-skin foreigner attached devices to the ATM booth of a bank.

The ATM card fraud in Bangladesh have forced almost all the 56 banks to take precautionary measures, including temporarily shutting down transactions through the national payment switch (NPS), to safeguard the interests of clients.

Some 10 million cards are used in some 7,000 banks in Bangladesh.

Sources said the offenders have stolen information of some 1200 cards to withdraw money by creating duplicates.

The Bangladesh Bank has already instructed all banks to install anti-skimming devices, monitor the surveillance footages by creating duplicates.

In fact, the Bangladesh Bank is intensifying intolerance of academics who criticise the generals efforts to stay in power by sending army officers to their homes, a Thai rights group said yesterday.

Since the military seized power nearly two years ago, at least 77 academics have been harrased at home by officers advising them to adjust their critical mindset or ordered to attend camps for indoctrination, according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights.

Those who attend the camps are usually released within a couple of days.

At least five academicians have been forced into exile, said Poonsuk Poonsukcharoem, a member of the lawyers group, which provides legal aid and monitors rights violations in Thailand and is influential with international NGOs, the European Union and other foreign gov- ernments.

“The country’s generals have struggled to revive Southeast Asia’s second-largest economy after ousting a democratically elected government in 2014 to end months of political unrest that was damaging business. There have been scattered protests against military rule, but they were quickly quelled by troops and police.”

Some Thai welcomed the coup after months of anti-gov- ernment street protests, but crit- ics accuse the military of delay- ing a return to democracy by pushing back the date for elec- tions.

Thai junta’s intimidation of academics revives insecurity — rights group

BANGKOK — Thailand’s junta is intensifying intimidation of academics who criticise the generals’ efforts to stay in power by sending army officers to their homes, a Thai rights group said yesterday.

Since the military seized power nearly two years ago, at least 77 academics have been harassed at home by officers advising them to adjust their critical mindset or ordered to attend camps for indoctrination, according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights.

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Some Thai welcomed the coup after months of anti-government street protests, but critics accuse the military of delaying a return to democracy by pushing back the date for elections.

Rights groups say the junta has used authoritarian methods to systematically repress rights and muzzle critics.

In a 24 February report, Amnesty International said Thai- land had dismissed international calls not to silence dissent.

Last week, self-exiled prominent Thai academic Pavin Chachavalpongpun took to social media to accuse the junta of intimidating his family in Thai- land.

“To hunt me is already un- acceptable. But for them to go after my family is really too much,” he told Reuters via Skype.

“This has to be the junta’s most daring move yet,” said Pav- in who gives lectures abroad on the Thai monarchy, a sensitive subject that cannot openly be discussed in Thailand because of draconian royal insult laws.

Junta spokesman Colonel Winthai Suvarnee denied that the military is pursuing academics with greater zeal and told Reuters he was unaware of any intimidation of Pavin’s family.

Authorities issued an arrest warrant for Pavin in June 2014, one of the coup’s prime targets, for ignoring a junta summons to attend a military ‘attitude adjustment’ session while abroad.

His passport was revoked the following month. The junta’s pursual of academics highlights its growing insecurity, said Kan Yuanpyong, an analyst at Siam Intelligence Unit think-tank.

“The military sees academics as a mouthpiece whose messages carry big significance,” said Kan. “Their criticism can do a lot to undermine the junta’s le- gitimacy.”—Reuters

India gives priority to action against terror over talks with Pakistan

NEW DELHI — Toughening its stand, India made it clear yesterday that it would give priority to action against terror over talks with Pakistan.

In the aftermath of a terror attack, if you ask me what will you give priority to, the terror attack or a dialogue, I think the an- swer is obvious,” said Indian For- eign Secretary S Jaishankar.

The Foreign Secretary’s remarks came in the wake of Paki- stan’s announcement that it might hand over the Pathankot air base terror attackers to India only after a thorough probe by Islamab- ad. “First of all, we have to in- vestigate ourselves and (find out) what it is... if he (Masood) does something wrong, we would move against him,” Sartaj Aziz, the Foreign Affairs Advisor to Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, had said Tuesday.

In fact, the Foreign Secretary- level talks between the two countries have been in a limbo since the terror attacks on the Indian Air Force base in Janu- ary.—Xinhua

Thai junta’s intimidation of academics revives insecurity — rights group

BANGKOK — Thailand’s junta is intensifying intimidation of academics who criticise the generals’ efforts to stay in power by sending army officers to their homes, a Thai rights group said yesterday.

Since the military seized power nearly two years ago, at least 77 academics have been harassed at home by officers advising them to adjust their critical mindset or ordered to attend camps for indoctrination, according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights.

Those who attend the camps are usually released within a couple of days.

At least five academics have been forced into exile, said Poonsuk Poonsukcharoem, a member of the lawyers group, which provides legal aid and monitors rights violations in Thailand and is influential with international NGOs, the European Union and other foreign governments.

“The country’s generals have struggled to revive Southeast Asia’s second-largest economy after ousting a democratically elected government in 2014 to end months of political unrest that was damaging business. There have been scattered protests against military rule, but they were quickly quelled by troops and police.”

Some Thai welcomed the coup after months of anti-government street protests, but critics accuse the military of delaying a return to democracy by pushing back the date for elections.

Rights groups say the junta has used authoritarian methods to systematically repress rights and muzzle critics.

In a 24 February report, Amnesty International said Thailand had dismissed international calls not to silence dissent.

Last week, self-exiled prominent Thai academic Pavin Chachavalpongpun took to social media to accuse the junta of intimidating his family in Thailand.

“To hunt me is already unacceptable. But for them to go after my family is really too much,” he told Reuters via Skype.

“This has to be the junta’s most daring move yet,” said Pavin who gives lectures abroad on the Thai monarchy, a sensitive subject that cannot openly be discussed in Thailand because of draconian royal insult laws.

Junta spokesman Colonel Winthai Suvarnee denied that the military is pursuing academics with greater zeal and told Reuters he was unaware of any intimidation of Pavin’s family.

Authorities issued an arrest warrant for Pavin in June 2014, one of the coup’s prime targets, for ignoring a junta summons to attend a military ‘attitude adjustment’ session while abroad.

His passport was revoked the following month. The junta’s pursual of academics highlights its growing insecurity, said Kan Yuanpyong, an analyst at Siam Intelligence Unit think-tank.

“The military sees academics as a mouthpiece whose messages carry big significance,” said Kan. “Their criticism can do a lot to undermine the junta’s legitimacy.”—Reuters

India gives priority to action against terror over talks with Pakistan

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**North Korea slams UN Human Rights Council, threatens boycott**

GENEVA — North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong on Tuesday blasted the UN Human Rights Council for increasingly politicizing the country’s rights record, threatening to boycott sessions and defy resolutions.

In a speech delivered at the council’s regular session, Ri said that “widespread politicization, selectivity and double standards” had worsened in the body since he addressed the body last year.

While North Korea was criticised by the council’s Commission of Inquiry for “systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations” in a report, the foreign minister said the country is guilty of “no such deplorable” or “cruel” infringements as gun-related violence claiming many lives each year in the United States.

“There are no extra large-scale crimes against humanity and heinous human rights violations such as Japan has committed, including by massacring millions of innocent civilians during World War II,” he added.

He slammed what he called the council’s double standards, saying that those violations by other countries have neither been given attention nor addressed, while North Korea, officially known as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, has been severely criticising.

“We shall no longer participate in international sessions singling out the human rights situation of five people from Laos were injured.

In late January, two Chinese nationals were killed and another wounder in a suspected bomb blast in Laos. That incident occurred in the remote Xaysomboun region, which has been plagued by sporadic conflict between the government and ethnic Hmong militants for years. It’s not uncommon for bandits to operate in the country’s countryside. Chinese workers have increasingly come under attack as China’s firms expand operations abroad, often in politically unstable places.

In November, three executives from a Chinese state-run railway firm were killed when militants attacked a hotel in Mali, which highlighted China’s limited means to respond to threats abroad.—Reuters

**Indian left-wing Naxalite rebels kill 10 villagers for informing police**

NEW DELHI — Indian police claimed yesterday that the left-wing Naxalite rebels have killed at least 10 villagers in the central state of Chhattisgarh in the last couple of days.

“The rebels have killed 10 villagers in the Abughum area in the state’s Narayanpur district, suspecting them to be police informers,” a senior police official said, on condition of anonymity.

A large number of security forces have been rushed to the area to prevent any kind of massacre by the left-wing rebels, he said.

The security forces have also been asked to be alert while venturing into the forested areas of the district as the Naxalites could set up traps to kill them, the official said.

Local residents often become victims of Naxalite terror, apart from security forces who are the real targets of the rebels.—Kyodo

**One Chinese worker killed in Laos ‘militant’ attack — Xinhua**

BEIJING — One Chinese national was killed and three wounded in a “militant” attack in Laos, state media said yesterday, in what was at least the second confirmed attack in the country involving Chinese workers this year.

China’s consulate in Luang Prabang province confirmed Tuesday’s attack, which was aimed at a shed of a Chinese-invested company, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The wounded workers were sent to a hospital and regional security forces were “sent to wipe out the militants”. Xinhua said.

The report did not give further details and it was unclear if the Chinese workers were intentionally targeted.

Xinhua said another attack occurred around the same time in the region targeting a bus and a pickup truck in which at least five people from Laos were injured.

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**Philippine officials say China blocking access to disputed South China Sea atoll**

MANILA — China has stationed several ships near a disputed atoll in the South China Sea, preventing Filipino fishermen from accessing traditional fishing grounds and raising tensions in the volatile region, Philippine officials said yesterday.

China had deployed up to seven ships to Quirino Atoll, also known as Jackson Atoll, a mayor of nearby Pagasa Island in the Spratly Islands, said the mayor.

China’s maritime claims extend to almost 90% of the South China Sea, a resource-rich region.

The Philippines said the presence was a clear violation of its right to travel, impeding freedom of navigation, and was a clear indication of China’s continued militarisation of the disputed Spratly Islands.

“Whether or not such resolutions are to be put to a vote will be none of our business and we will never, ever be bound by them,” he said.

—Kyodo News

**Warrantless GPS tracking of suspects by police not illegal: court**

OSAKA — Police did not break the law by installing GPS tracking devices in the cars of suspected criminals without obtaining warrants, the Osaka High Court said yesterday.

There was “no major illegality” in the police action, the appeals court said as it reversed an Osaka District Court judgment last July that said the investigation was “illegal,” and upheld a sentence of five and a half years in prison for a 44-year-old man.

The man from Osaka Prefecture was arrested in December 2013 on suspicion of stealing cars and other items mainly in the Kansai region in western Japan between 2012 and 2013, according to the ruling.

The defendant initially pleaded guilty but later appealed on the grounds that the gathering of evidence without a warrant was illegal. The lower court excluded from evidence the information gathered in the warrantless investigation. According to hearings in the lower court, five prefectural police departments — Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nagasaki and Kumamoto — installed GPS devices in 19 cars, including the defendant’s, for about half a year for investigation purposes without obtaining warrants.

In the appeal trial, lawyers for the defendant argued that “the level of illegality was extremely high because investigation through GPS should not be carried out without legislation.”

Japan’s Criminal Procedure Law has no provisions directly referring to GPS operations.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, insisted warrants were not needed as GPS terminals simply provided information that was available to the public.—Kyodo

**The story behind the map**

The map shows China’s claims to a part of the South China Sea that are contested by the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines. China claims most of the South China Sea, including areas rich in oil and natural gas.

The map also highlights the Spratly Islands, a group of small islands in the South China Sea that are claimed by China, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan.

The map was produced and distributed by China’s state media. It is widely used by China to support its territorial claims in the South China Sea.

The map is often used by Chinese officials and state media to argue that China has a historical and legal right to the South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands.

The map is also used by China to challenge foreign claims to the South China Sea, including those made by the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan and the United States.

The map is often used by China in its international interactions, including diplomacy, trade and security.

The map is also used by China to promote its economic interests in the South China Sea, including its maritime and oil and gas exploration.

The map is often used by China to promote its image as a regional power and to show its commitment to the rule of law.

The map is also used by China to promote its image as a peacekeeping force in the region, including efforts to reduce tensions and promote stability.

The map is also used by China to promote its image as a global player, including its role in international organizations and its contributions to global governance.

The map is also used by China to promote its image as a responsible stakeholder, including its commitment to regional and international rules and norms.
Don’t miss the point

Kyaw Thura

AFTER half a decade of piecemeal progress, many an outstanding issue remains to be solved amid mounting sporadic clashes between ethnic armed groups. As is known to all, our country is just emerging from the painful days of international sanctions imposed upon the junta. At this crucial juncture, all the decision makers and the people must be smart enough to be alert to the problem of the disintegration of national sovereign power.

As a welcome diversion, the recent unexpected news filled the whole country with eager anticipation. The Aung Soe Htut Htutaw, (Upper House) announced on Tuesday that it preponed the presidential nominations to 10 March, a week earlier than the previous date set on 17 March. It is safe to interpret the election outcome as a litmus test of the level of public support for the National League for Democracy, which secured over 60% of parliamentary seats in the country’s historic elections on 8 November last year.

On mature reflection, the time is ripe enough for the government, the parliament, the defense services and the people to open a new chapter in the country’s history by enhancing domestic abilities and grasping international opportunities. The problem facing us all today is not about who should rule the country but who can best serve the interests of the people and the country as a whole. A reasonable compromise is the key to a successful negotiation. After all, a compromise solution to the choice of the supreme leader is the pivot of national development.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email to kyaw@myanmarnews.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish ‘Letter to the Editor’ that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

The Nordic countries unite in Myanmar

THE four Nordic countries have been working under the same roof in Yangon since 2012. What started as a practical arrangement has now developed into an innovative pilot project for Nordic cooperation globally. In order to celebrate the strong collaboration between the Nordic countries in Myanmar, and the move to our new premises, an Open House event will be held at the Nordic House on 3 March.

While Nordic embassies are physically located together in other countries such as Berlin, Dhaka and Kabul, the Nordic House in Yangon represents the most ambitious Nordic cooperation so far. In Yangon, we not only share common office space, but also common administration. This allows us to collaborate closely and to offer a comprehensive platform of support to the people of Myanmar.

The Nordic countries have for many years had a close collaboration, with the view to maintain peace and strengthen integration in the Nordic region. A visible example of this collaboration is the establishment in 1971 of the Nordic Council of Ministers, a regional intergovernmental organisation with this specific purpose.

What we like to refer to as the “Nordic model” is a society that is deeply rooted in democracy and respect for human rights. That human rights are enshrined in the social and political fabric of the Nordic societies is also one of the main reasons behind our strong democratic systems and prosperity.

More specifically, the Nordic model is built on a tradition characterised by the rule of law, active civic movements and strong civil society organisations, freedom of expression, equality, and solidarity. As well-established democracies, we share a tradition of involving our grassroots and of fostering a strong culture of social engagement, participation, accountability and transparency when it comes to political decision-making.

Importantly, the Nordic countries are built on strong welfare systems and on clean and transparent governments. This has been confirmed in various global rankings, such as Transparency International’s Anticorruption Index.

The Nordic support to the people of Myanmar dates back several decades, most notably in our support to civil society and to democratization efforts. We share the belief that peace and reconciliation are essential prerequisites for development and prosperity. Therefore we are strongly committed to support all stakeholders in the on-going peace process. A key issue in this regard will be that the different needs and interests of women and girls, men and boys are taken into account in the peace process, and that women are able to participate to a greater extent and on equal terms.

Our support to Myanmar is directed to many areas, including poverty reduction, improved access to education and health, strengthening the civil society and independent media, enhancing environmental sustainability as well as promoting job creation. And, as gender equality is a central and crosscutting feature in all four countries’ support to Myanmar, we will continue to promote this agenda in all spheres of our relations together with our Myanmar partners.

Nordic companies have in recent years established a significant presence in Myanmar, even taking on leading roles in sectors such as telecommunication, energy, textiles, beverage and food products, and shipping.

These businesses are vital in ensuring long-term, sustainable poverty eradication through creating value and broadly based wealth, tax revenues and productive jobs. Inherent in this role is also the responsibility of implementing sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility, principles that form a common denominator for the Nordic business community.

The Nordic countries look forward to work closely together with all our partners in Myanmar in supporting the on-going reform and democratization process in the country. We wish to see Myanmar succeed in becoming a peaceful and democratic society with equitable, sustainable and inclusive growth that promotes human rights for all people.

Written by: H.E. Peter Lysholt Hansen, Ambassador of Denmark to Myanmar
H.E. Ann Olestad, Ambassador of Norway to Myanmar
Mr. Jarmo Matti Kuuttila, Chargé d’Affaires a.i., the Diplomatic Mission of Finland
Mr. Johan Hallenborg, Head of Office, Swedish Embassy, Section Office in Yangon

The History of the Sandaw Shin Pagoda Situated in Pauk Taw Township of Rakhine State

Dr. Saw Mra Aung

The Sandaw Shin Pagoda stands gracefully on a low hill named ‘Nilapabbata’ at the southernmost edge of Myangyi Island, one of the Cheduba Islands, off the Rakhine coast in Pauk Taw Township. As the hill rises sheer from the sea-bay, the pagoda terrace at its top overlooks the vastness and openness of the blue water extending as far in all directions as the eyes can reach. Therefore, the pilgrims who enjoy the unspoiled beauty of the sea from the pagoda will surely feel a strange sense of vastness and openness of the limitless sky and sea. To reach the pagoda, the people from Sittway will first have to take a three-hour boat-ride in crossing the mouth of the Kalandan River down to some islets wooded with groves of greenercy coconut palms, studded with stratified rocks and fringed with silver sands, then to the Soe Mee Kyi Port on the northern side of the island and finally to take a two-mile mountain-crossing to the hill topped with the pagoda, feasting their eyes upon the countrified scenery on their way.

This pagoda is rife with legendary accounts of the enshrinement of the Buddha’s hair relics. One legendary account claims that, in 1323rd year of the Maha Era, at the mental invitation of king Candasaurya, the then ruler of Dhammavat, the Buddha, accompanied by his 500 disciples, journeyed to Rakhine from Majhimadasea through the sky in a celestial chariot decorated with the tiered-roof created by the Sakka. The Buddha first took a stand at the top of the Selagiri Mountain on the bank of the Gacchapandhi which is today called ‘Kaladan’ River. While thus standing on the mountain, he, pointing towards the direction where the Myingyi Island is, prophesied thus, ‘I will proceed to Dvaravati (Thandwe) from this Dhammavat. While on the way there, I will come down to make a brief stop at the top of the Nilapabba Mountain. Then I will have a pagoda built and two hair relics of mine enshrined in it. The pagoda will subsequently come to be known as the Sandaw Shin Pagoda...’

After the casting of the Maha Myatmyuni Buddha Image at the plea of King Candasaurya for the public devotion on his behalf, the Buddha, as had prophesied, continued on his journey to Dvaravati. When he came to the mouth of the Gacchapandhi where it empties into the ocean, the surface of the ocean became extra-ordinarily rough with big waves. Due to this strange event, eight celestial serpents (Nagas)
Falling prices halt watermelon exports to China

Watermelons. PHOTO: MAUNG PHU THU (MOL)

Weather Bureau keeps monitoring Tsunami as earthquake hits Indonesia

FOLLOWING a massive earthquake in Indonesia, Myanmar Earthquake Committee has alerted itself on possible Tsunami waves in coastal areas of Myanmar. The Meteorology and Hydrology Department is closely working together with meteorological bureaus of Indonesia and Australia, keeping on watch the situation in order to issue warnings timely said an official of the department to the Myanmar News Agency yesterday.

A massive quake struck on Wednesday off the Indonesian island of Sumatra, a region devastated by the 2004 Indian Ocean quake and tsunami, but initial fears of another region-wide disaster faded as tsunami warnings were canceled.—Myanmar News Agency.

The History of the Sandaw Shin Pagoda Situated in Pauk Taw Township of Rakhine State

>> From page 8

headed by Jeyyasena Naga knew about the arrival of the Buddha at the Nilagiri of Rakhine. He invited the Buddha and his followers for alm-meal. After partaking of the meal, the Buddha went down the mountain on his 8-foot-print(padas) on a rock at its base. At that instant, the earth quivered vehemently and extremely big waves rose high in the ocean. Then the Buddha crossed the ocean. When they arrived at the Ajjhatta town in Jettha Sunday, the Myosa (the officer of the town in fief), having known that they brought with them the hair relics of the Buddha, began to grow the watermelons around mid-November so they can sell the fruits in January.

Farmers invest about K1 million per acre for hybrid watermelon seeds, furrow ploughing, irrigation and labour charges. After the Chinese Lunar New Year in the second week of February, as a result of declining demand from China and the falling price of the fruit, farmers halted watermelon exports.

The farmers have sold their produce on stalls along the Yangon-Mandalay highway for between K500 and K1500.—Maung Pyi Thu (MOL)

Bicycle shops in Rakhine close up shop as sales dwindle

Dwindling sales of bicycle shops in Rakhine State, which sell a variety of foreign cycles from countries such as China, Japan and Thailand, has forced some to close up shop for good, according to bicycle shops owners in the region.

The proliferation of people in Rakhine State’s urban centres using cars and three-wheeled motor vehicles, combined with abounding numbers of unlicensed motorbikes, forced over twenty bicycle shops in five towns across the State, including Sittwe and Kyauk Phyu, to shut down their businesses for lack of sales.

“There used to be over twenty bicycle shops in Sittwe back in 2010. One was able to purchase a cycle for just K40,000 because of few sales, but a lack of buyers these days hasn’t allowed the bicycle selling business to be financially viable anymore. As such, those bicycle shops have either shut up shop or changed their type of business. Only about five cycle shops remain today.” —U Hla Aung, a bicycle shopkeeper from Sittwe.

A Chinese, Japan or Thai produced bicycle in the Rakhine State bicycle market fetch in price between K80,000-K120,000 depending on what models go for approximately K60,000-K80,000. However, last year saw the price of some cycles drop as low as K40,000, according to bicycle shops.

“It’s not a good situation for the bike world in the urban landscape anymore. Apart for school children, people aren’t really buying bicycles. We’ve got over a hundred cycles out of place that we can’t move. We’re having to go out into the countryside to try and sell of our remaining cycles in order to make back our initial investment,” said U Khin Maung Rj, a bicycle shopkeeper from Kyauk Phyu.

Bicycle shopkeepers often lament the fact that in the years before the turn of the new millennium, those who drove motorcycles in the rural areas outside of Rakhine State’s main urban centres were limited to the heads of some government departments and businessmen, the number of motorcycle amounting to less than a hundred.—Myitmakha News Agency.
MIAMI — Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton rolled up a series of wins on Tuesday, as the two presidential front-runners took a step toward capturing their parties’ nominations on the 2016 campaign’s biggest day of state-by-state primary contests.

Trump and Clinton turned their sights on each other after their Super Tuesday wins, with Trump promising to “go after” Clinton and the former secretary of state decrieing what she called Trump’s divisive rhetoric.

US networks projected Trump won six and Clinton seven states on Super Tuesday, when 12 states were voting. Trump won Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia. Meanwhile, Clinton won Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Trump’s rival Ted Cruz, a US senator from Texas, won his home state and neighbouring Oklahoma, bolstering his argument he had the best chance to stop the controversial Trump. US Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, favourite of the Republican establishment, was projected the winner in Minnesota, his first victory.

Clinton’s rival Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist US-senator from Vermont, also won his home state along with Colorado, Minnesota and Oklahoma and vowed to pursue the battle for the nomination in the 35 states that had yet to vote.

Super Tuesday was the biggest single day of state-by-state contests to select party nominees for the 8 November election to succeed Democratic President Barack Obama.

Opinion polls heading into the voting had shown Trump leading in most of the 11 Republican contests up for grabs, raising the possibility of a big night that would intensify worries among Republican leaders who fear the billionaire could inflict long-term damage on the party.

“I am a unifier,” Trump told reporters in Palm Beach, Florida, dismissing concerns that his nomination would rip apart the party. “Once we get all this finished, I’m going after one person — Hillary Clinton.”

The networks had yet to project a winner for Republicans in Alaska.

Clinton had Trump on her mind in her victory speech, although she never mentioned him by name.

“The stakes in this election have never been higher and the rhetoric we’re hearing on the other side has never been lower,” Clinton, 68, told supporters in Miami. “Trying to divide America between us and them is wrong, and we’re not going to let it work.”

Sanders won his home state of Vermont and Oklahoma, two of five states he was targeting for victory on Tuesday. He lost to Clinton in Massachusetts, another state he was hoping to win.

Sanders thanked cheering supporters in his hometown of Burlington, Vermont, and as- sailed the Republican front-runner.

“We are not going to let the Donald Trumps of the world do us in,” said Sanders, 74, adding that he expected to pile up “hundreds” of convention delegates in voting on Tuesday.

Trump, 69, has warned many in the Republican establishment with proposals such as building a wall along the US southern border with Mexico, deporting 11 million illegal immigrants and slamming a temporary ban on Muslims entering the US. Sanders thanked cheering supporters in his hometown of Burlington, Vermont, and assailed the Republican front-runner.

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Even as Trump advances, many Republican Party leaders do not support him and worry that he would be easily defeated in November if Clinton becomes the Democratic nominee.

Cruz told supporters at his victory party in Texas that Trump was a “Washington dealmaker, profane and vulgar, who has a lifelong pattern of using government power for personal gain.”

The crossfire between Trump and establishment Repub- licans threatened to tear the party apart at a time when it will need to generate momentum behind a prospective nominee.

President Tomislav Nikolic opens new athletics hall

BEIJING — China’s Foreign Ministry urged the United States yesterday not to sensationalise the South China Sea dispute after US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said Beijing’s actions there would have consequences.

Carter on Tuesday warned China against “aggressive” actions in the South China Sea region, including the placement of surface-to-air missiles on a disputed island. — Reuters

Rebic: 1,000 migrants stranded in Serbia

BELGRADE — Around 1,000 migrants are currently stranded in Serbia, with the same number of them waiting at the Serbia-Macedonia border to enter our country, Acting Police Director Vladimir Rebic said on Tuesday.

After an operational meeting of police directors and border police chiefs of Serbia, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia, Rebic told reporters that around 7,000 migrants were waiting at the Greece-Macedonia border, with many more in Greece heading to Western Europe.

“Noting that one of the aims of Tuesday’s meeting, in which there were no representatives of Greece and Germany, was to ensure a flow that would ease the pressure on the Greece-Macedonia border, Rebic underscored Serbia would not set up any fences, but rather protect the border in line with the existing regulations. — Tanjug

Halted Kansai Electric reactor in cold shutdown for safety probe

FUKUI — Kansai Electric Power Co. has put a nuclear reactor at its Takahama plant in a state of cold shutdown to investigate why the automatic suspension of the unit was triggered earlier this week, the utility said yesterday.

The No. 4 reactor at the nuclear power plant in Fukui Prefecture on the Sea of Japan shut down automatically Monday, just three days after coming back online under Japan’s stricter safety regulations following the 2011 Fukushima meltdowns.

An electrical current exceeding a preset level may have been detected by a monitoring device around a transformer of the reactor, triggering a safety mechanism upon the start of power generation, the company said Tuesday. — Kyodo News

Two Palestinian teens shot dead after attacking Israeli in W.Bank

JERUSALEM — Israeli soldiers shot dead two Palestinian teens who had attacked an Israeli settler at his home in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the military said, as a wave of heightened violence entered its sixth month.

“There were two young guys, teenagers, terrorists, at my door, dressed in dark clothes and holding wooden clubs,” the Israeli man, Roi Harel, from the Eli settlement near the Palestin- ian city of Nablus, told Army Radio.

He said the two began beating him before he managed to push them out of the house, and he also found a knife at the door.

Soldiers who rushed to the scene shot the two Palestinians, a military spokeswoman said. “Upon the significant threat to the people of the community, forces shot the attackers, resulting in their death,” the military said in a statement.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said the two were both 17, from the adjacent village of Qaryout. — Reuters
Osama called for Americans to rise up over climate change

WASHINGTON — Osama bin Laden wrote a letter calling on the American people to help President Barack Obama fight “catastrophic” climate change and “save humanity”, in the latest evidence of his worries about environmental issues, newly released documents show.

The letter was among materials that were seized in the 2 May, 2011, US raid on bin Laden’s hideout in Pakistan that killed the al Qaeda chief and which were released on Tuesday by the Obama administration.

The undated, unsigned letter to “the American people,” which US intelligence officials attributed to bin Laden, appeared to have been written shortly after Obama began his first term in 2009, based on the letter’s references to events.

Bin Laden’s preoccupation with climate change also emerged as a theme in the first tranche of documents from the raid that was declassified in May 2015, as well as in an audio recording released via the al Jazeera network in January 2010.

In the rambling letter made public Tuesday, bin Laden blamed the 2007-8 US financial crisis on corporate control of capital and corporate lobbyists, and the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He called on Americans to launch “a great revolution for freedom” to liberate the US president from those influences.

That would enable Obama to make “a rational decision to save humanity from the harmful gas that threatens its destiny,” bin Laden continued.

In a separate letter, bin Laden urged a close aide to launch a media campaign for the 10th anniversary of the 11 September, 2001, attacks that included a call for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Bin Laden also contended that the world would be better off fighting climate change than waging what he claimed was a war against Islam.

“The world should put its efforts into attempting to reduce the release of gases,” said the undated, unsigned letter to someone identified as Shuykh Mahmud that US intelligence officials said they believed was written by bin Laden.

This is a struggle between two of the largest cultures on Earth, and it is in the shadow of catastrophic climate conditions.” — Reuters

Afghan policemen take position during gunfire near the Indian consulate in Jalalabad, Afghanistan on 2 March 2016. Photo: Reuters

Afghan forces kill Indian consulate suicide attackers

JALALABAD — Afghan security forces killed yesterday a team of suicide bombers who targeted the Indian consulate in the eastern city of Jalalabad, following an attack in which at least six people were wounded, officials said.

The incident, coming just days after dozens of people were killed or wounded in suicide attacks in the capital, Kabul, and the eastern province of Kunar, casts doubt on efforts to revive a stalled peace process with the Taliban.

A bomb in a car driven by one of the attackers was detonated near the Indian consulate, shuttering doors and windows and destroying at least eight cars as explosions and gunfire rocked the area, witnesses said.

Security forces in armoured vehicles were seen moving to the scene, while civilians fled.

But the four attackers were killed before being able to enter the consulate compound, said Ataullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the governor of Nangarhar Province.

“Their target was the Indian consulate, but our forces shot and killed them all before they reached their target,” he said.

The head of the public health department in Nangarhar, Naibullah Kamawal, said at least six people had been wounded in the attack.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which followed a suicide attack on the nearby Pakistani consulate in January.

That attack was claimed by Islamic State, which has a growing presence in Nangarhar, the province of which Jalalabad is the capital.

In January, India’s consulate in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif was also attacked by insurgents. — Reuters

Gulf Arab states label Hezbollah a terrorist organisation

DUBAI — The six-member Gulf Cooperation Council has designated Hezbollah a terrorist organisation, it said yesterday, ratcheting up pressure on the Iran-aligned group that wields influence in Lebanon and plays a key role in the Syrian crisis.

Gulf Arab states imposed sanctions on Hezbollah members in 2013 in retaliation for the group’s intervention in Syria’s civil war in support of President Bashar al-Assad. And individual GCC countries — including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain — have labelled the group terrorists.

But the GCC Secretary-General, Abdullatif al-Zayani, in a statement issued in Riyadh, said that the GCC had now taken a collective decision on the group.

“As the militia continues its terrorist practices, the GCC states have decided to label it a terrorist organisation and will take the necessary measures to implement its decision in this regard based on anti-terrorism laws applied in the GCC and similar international laws,” the statement quoted Zayani as saying.

The decision came one day after a speech by Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah that Saudi Arabia had pushed Lebanon into a new phase of political conflict by announcing it was suspending an aid package to the Lebanese army.

Nasrallah also stepped up criticism of Saudi Arabia, accusing it of directing car bombings in Lebanon, an arena for sectarian Iranian-Saudi rivalry that is escalating across the Middle East.

For his part, Zayani accused Hezbollah of committing hostile acts against GCC states, including recruiting young men to carry out “terrorist attacks, smuggling weapons and explosives, stirring up sedition and incitement to chaos and violence”. Sunni-led Saudia Arabia, the biggest member of the GCC, wields considerable influence in Lebanon through its backing for Sunni politician Saad al-Hariri, a former prime minister who said on Tuesday that “riots, road blocking and tyre burning” were attempts to provoke “chaos and discord”. “We should not be dragged to any attempt of this sort,” he said.

Tension between Hezbollah and Hariri spilled into armed conflict as recently as 2008, when a political dispute fuelled by Saudi-Iranian rivalry triggered a brief civil war. Nasrallah said there would be no repeat of that conflict. — Reuters

Australia softens sanctions against Iran

SYDNEY — Australia followed major world powers by lifting sanctions on Iran yesterday, after confirmation from the United Nations that Tehran had taken steps required to curb its disputed nuclear programme.

Under changes announced by the Australian government, businesses will no longer need to seek approval for transactions of more than A$20,000 ($14,436) involving entities from Iran.

While Australia has suspended some of the sanctions imposed on Iran autonomously in 2008 because of the Islamic Republic’s nuclear programme, some non-nuclear sanctions remain in place, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said in a statement.

Sanctions still in force against Iran include restrictions on the transfer of proliferation sensitive goods, the arms and ballistic missiles embargoes and sanctions against some designated persons and entities. Australia’s anti-money laundering watchdog AUSTRAC says all transactions to those two countries should be considered as “high risk.”

Iran has always denied its nuclear programme was aimed at obtaining an atomic bomb.

The United States and other countries formally lifted banking, steel, shipping and other sanctions on Iran in January, giving one of the world’s major oil producers access to international markets that it had been virtually shut out of for the past five years. — Reuters
Parts of Great Barrier Reef face permanent destruction due to El Niño — scientists

SYDNEY — Parts of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef face permanent destruction if the current El Niño, one of the strongest in two decades, does not ease this month, scientists said yesterday. "The El Niño is a result of a warming of the western Pacific — ideal conditions for coral bleaching, where coral expels living algae, causing it to calcify. Coral can only survive within a narrow band of ocean temperature." The scientists said areas of the Great Barrier Reef, a world heritage site, are experiencing the worst bleaching in 15 years. Coral around Lizard Island off the tropical city of Cairns has seen the most widespread bleaching, with 80 per cent of its coral bleached under unrelenting sunlight, Dr Anne Hoggett, director, Lizard Island Research Station told Reuters. "Bleaching is a clear signal that living corals are under physiological stress. If that stress is bad enough for long enough, the corals can die," said Dr Russell Reichelt, chairman of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority said. "What happens now will be entirely dependent on local weather conditions," said Reichelt. Scientists said the Great Barrier Reef needs a break in El Niño conditions within weeks if some coral areas are to survive. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology’s most recent forecast calls for a continuation of El Niño conditions this year will be the hottest on record and 2016 could be even hotter due to the El Niño weather pattern, the World Meteorological Organisation. The Great Barrier Reef stretches 2,000 kms (1,200 miles) along Australia’s northeastern coast and is the world’s largest living ecosystem. It brings in billions of dollars a year in tourism revenue. UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee last May stopped short of placing the Great Barrier Reef on an “in danger” list, but the ruling raised long-term concerns about its future due to climate change. "Coral is the canary in the mine," said Hoggett of the looming threat from climate change.—Reuters

Apple lawyer, FBI director face off in Congress on iPhone encryption

WASHINGTON — FBI Director James Comey told a congressional panel on Tuesday that a final court ruling forcing Apple Inc (AAPL) to give the FBI data from an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino shooters would be "potentially precedent" in other cases where the agency might request similar cooperation from technology companies. The remarks were a slight change to Comey’s statement last week that ordering Apple to unlock the phone was "unlikely to be a trailblazer" for setting a precedent for other cases. Tuesday’s testimony from Comey and remarks before the same US House Judiciary Committee by Apple’s general counsel, Bruce Sewell, brought the US Congress a public fight between Apple and the government over the dueling interests of privacy and security that has so far only been heard in the courts. On 16 February, a federal court in California instructed Apple to write special software to unlock the iPhone 5c used by gunman Rizwan Farook, an order the company is contesting. Sewell and Comey’s remarks also clarified some areas where the two sides fundamentally disagree. Sewell said Apple feared for Farook’s iPhone would not work on other models. But Sewell said the tool that Apple was being asked to create would work on any iPhone. "This is not about the San Bernardino case. This is about the safety and security of every iPhone that is in use today," Sewell said. Committee members seized on Comey’s statement that the case could set a legal precedent allowing the agency access to any encrypted device. "Given... that explicit denial that authority so far, can you appreciate our frustration that this case appears to be little more than an end run around this command?’’ asked the panel’s ranking minority member, Michigan Representative John Conyers.—Reuters

Aid agencies brace for devastating Mongolian ‘dzud’ this winter

ULAANBAATAR — Global aid agencies are responding to a call for assistance by Mongolia as harsh winter weather raises fears for the safety and livelihoods of the country’s traditional pastoralists, who have already been hit hard by a drought last year. Dry weather has scorched most of Mongolia’s wheat crop and now mass animal deaths due to a freezing winter, locally known as “dzud”, are threatening even more pain for the country, where farming accounts for about 31 per cent of the economy. The last dzud in 2009-2010 killed 9.7 million of the country’s livestock, according to the National Emergency Agency of Mongolia. While the government has not yet declared the current winter a natural disaster, Bruce Sewell, brought to the situation could get worse. So far, a drop in temperatures to minus 55 Celsius (minus 79 Fahrenheit) has killed nearly 200,000 livestock. The weather and grazing conditions are already worse than they were in the previous dzud, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said in a statement, citing the Mongolian Ministry of Food and Agriculture. “Usually for the dzud, the most devastation is observed in March, April and May,” Gai dolphin, national programme co-ordinator for the IFRC in Mongolia, told Reuters. The IFRC said it has launched an emergency appeal for $34,000 Swiss. Comey said the tool could assist 25,500 Mongolian herders, who are at risk of losing their livestock and livelihoods due to the extreme winter. Currently, 80 per cent of Mongolia is under snow, making it difficult for nomadic families to travel along centuries-old pasture routes to find food for their livestock. Aggravating the situation is the fact that herders can live up to 50 kms (31 miles) from urban settlements and many are without cars. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has said it plans to provide trucks to get aid to families’ doorsteps at some of the most-difficult-to-reach areas. "We want to relieve the congress of this explicitly of distance to the most affected," Ben Hemingway, USAID’s regional adviser, said on phone from Bang- kod. In the worst affected districts, sheep and other livestock have started dying. Many herders are trying to sell their animals while they are still alive, leading to an oversupply of livestock that has driven down market prices. Although the death toll for animals so far is far less than in 2009, "the impact on the people is more or less the same", said Enkhjim. "Livelihoods will be impacted immediately and have devastating effects.--- Reuters

Wrinkle Free Garment and Method of Manufacture


Used in respect of:-

A Method of manufacturing wrinkle free garment seams and garments made therefrom comprises (a) placing a bonding element comprising a thermal adhesive between garment components; (b) stitching along a seam line; and (c) applying heat and/or pressure to cause the adhesive to melt and flow along the seam to bond at least one garment component. The thermal adhesive has a melting point of higher than about 150º C, preferably in the range about 160º C to about 190ºC. Alternatively, a bonding ele- ment seam comprising any adhesive material and having a substantially U shape is used to make various seams, such as a yoke seam, a shoulder seam, a side seam, a poc- ket seam,a hem button stay seam,a sleeve seam,a collar seam,etc. Wrinkle free garments, such as shirts, pants, blouses, blouses, skirts, etc. incorporating the seams are produced. Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said patent or other infringements whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

AungNaing Moe, Advocate
Ong Minn U, Advocate
May Phyoo Kin, H.G.P
For: Guangdong Esquel Textiles Co., Ltd.
Myanmar Global Law Firm
Ph:0973220023
Date: 3 March 2016
Women use 5,000 euphemisms to ease pain of talking about periods

Author: Alex Whiting

LONDON — “Having the painters in,” “shark week,” “on the rag” and “Body Mary” are all euphemisms for the same thing: menstruation, a subject that is still taboo in many countries in the world, according to a major survey on the issue.

Women refer to periods in code using some 5,000 euphemisms, avoid discussing the issue with male colleagues or relatives, and some skip school or work to hide their symptoms, a survey of 90,000 people in 190 countries has found.

Most participants globally said they had received information about starting their period, but there were some major gaps. In Russia 75 per cent said they had not received enough, in Ukraine it was 60 per cent, and in India 40 per cent.

Puerto Ricans were most comfortable talking to male colleagues and classmates about periods, whereas participants from Saudi Arabia were the least.

Puerto Ricans were also the most comfortable talking to male relatives about the issue, and Japanese participants the least — just 13 per cent said they felt comfortable.

“It’s unfortunate that so many people feel they aren’t able to be open about their periods, and, in many regions, this is even the case within families,” said Ida Ward, president of the International Women’s Health Coalition.

This was most common in Australia, Brazil and Chile where nearly a quarter of participants had missed an event because of their period.

At the other end of the scale, only between 5 and 8 per cent of Singaporeans, Indonesians and Italians said they had stayed home because they did not want people to find out they were menstruating.

“We need to do a lot more to make sure women and girls know and are comfortable speaking about their sexual and reproductive health and their rights,” said Françoise Girard, president of the International Women’s Health Coalition.

The survey published on Monday was carried out using Clue’s female health app, with the help of the US-based International Women’s Health Coalition which promotes women’s sexual and reproductive health worldwide.—Reuters

Most nations in Americas have laws that can suppress journalism—report

NEW YORK — All but one nation in the Americas have criminal defamation laws that can be used against journalists to suppress freedom of expression, according to a report released yesterday.

Only Jamaica has entirely repealed laws that would permit journalists to be prosecuted for their reporting, according to the study released by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Two-thirds of the countries in North, Central and South America routinely use such laws to silence dissent and keep information from their citizens, the report said.

“Despite the emerging consensus that criminal defamation laws violate international freedom of expression standards, the continued use of such provisions has deterred the aggressive reporting necessary for robust debate in a free and open society,” CPJ’s Carlos Lauria and Sara Rafsky wrote in the report.

“Even if infrequently applied, the continuing existence of these laws represents a lurking danger to free expression.”

Laws that can be used against journalists include defamation, libel, calumny, or making false charges, and “desacato” offenses which refer to insulting or offending the state or state officials, the report said.

Specifically the report said 32 out of 33 nations in the Americas penalize defamation with criminal laws that can be used to punish journalists.

Jamaica from 2011 to 2013 repealed its laws that criminalised libel and amended constitutional provisions regarding freedom of expression, it said.

Even where such laws are not typically enforced, their very existence has a “chilling effect” on the spread of information, the report said.

Criminal defamation laws have resulted in imprisonment in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela, it said.

Mexico and the United States do not have criminal defamation laws at the federal level, but do at the state level, it said.

While there is a trend toward abolition of criminal defamation laws in the United States and Mexico, there are no such trends in Central America, the Caribbean or South America, it said.—Reuters

INVITATION ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR THE FIXED BROADBAND NETWORK PROJECT

Yatanarpon Teleport Public Co., Ltd. (YTP) is a registered public company providing ISP services in Myanmar, located at Haingnus University’s Campus, Yangon. Currently holding NFS (I) license, YTP provides broadband Internet, IP-VPN services and data center facilities and is now in progress to utilize FTTx technology as the main platform to offer high speed, comprehensive Internet services in near future. Anticipated the successful launch, YTP hereby invites eligible bidders for the supply of equipments, installation and associated services for the “Fixed Broadband Network Project” in Yangon and Mandalay Regions.

The schedule is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Announcement</td>
<td>1–3 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of RFP</td>
<td>3–9 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last date of written queries by interested companies</td>
<td>10 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to the queries</td>
<td>16 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline of submission of proposal</td>
<td>24 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of winning bidders</td>
<td>29 April 2016</td>
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Interested companies can submit proposal for one or more lots as mentioned below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot No.</th>
<th>specification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot 1.</td>
<td>Supply and Installation of Metro IP Core Equipment and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 2.</td>
<td>Supply and Installation of DWDM System</td>
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<td>Lot 4.</td>
<td>Supply of Optical Cable</td>
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<td>Lot 5.</td>
<td>Supply of ODN Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lot 6.</td>
<td>Supply of Accessories for Optical Cable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 7.</td>
<td>Supply and Installation of Mechanical and Electrical Equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please be requested to that observe all instructions, terms and conditions and project requirements. Documents will only be available at Tender Committee Office, Yatanarpon Teleport Public Company Ltd. (YTP) and queries will be responded as mentioned in the schedule. Failure to furnish the correct and complete information will be void and incomplete submission of documents after the deadline is not exchangeable.

For queries and submission of documents, please contact “Tender Committee Office”
Tel:+95 4421190 Fax:+95 652300
Monday to Friday (10am to 3pm)

Yatanarpon Teleport Public Co., Ltd. (YTP)
No. 25, Universities’ Haingnus Campus; Haingnus Township, Yangon Region, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, P.O Box 909.
Email: ytp-tender@teleport.net.mm
www.yatanarpon.net.mm/proposal-for-fixedbroadbandnetworkproject2016
Festival of films by women — experimental, sci-fi, fiction etc

NEW DELHI — Works by women directors of Asian origin ranging from animation, documentary, experimental, short fiction to feature are set to be featured in the upcoming 12th IAWRT Asian Women’s Film Festival beginning here from 3 March.

The festival, which began in 2005 and is now held annually around International Women’s Day, has for this edition included 35 films from 13 countries apart from a special section of 11 films from Palestine under ‘Voices of Palestine’.

“A interesting aspect of the film festival is an audio segment called soundphiles. This is the third year we are showcasing this segment where artists send in their sound entries. This year we have a total of 8 sound works,” says Uma Tanuku, Festival Director.

Tanuku has curated the festival along with Aradna Kohli. 24 filmmakers and sound artists are scheduled to take part in the three-day event where films from Bangladesh, Iran, Israel, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, South Korea, Syria, Taiwan, Turkey, the UK, Vietnam apart from those from India and Palestine will be screened.

Los Angeles — Pop star Taylor Swift served as maid of honour at her best friend Britany Maack’s February wedding during which she touched every attendee’s heart with her emotional speech.

The “Out of the Woods” hitmaker recalled her BFF and her man’s adorable beginnings, saying they had one of the “best love stories,” reported Ace Showbiz.

In a video from the ceremony which was uploaded, but later deleted, by Britany, the 26-year-old songstress began her speech by recalling the sweet couple’s adorable beginnings.

“She would chase her and pursue her through middle school and junior high and high school, and their paths would diverge, and then come back together,” she said at the reception.

“It would be so magically unpredictable, but at the same time, so incredibly fated just like the best love stories are,” Swift said.

“My favourite accomplishment of my entire life is that everything in my life has changed except for me and Britany,” Swift said. The video also showed a series of events from the rehearsal dinner to the reception.

“As one point during the reception, Swift was seen hitting the dance floor and showing off some amazing moves along with Britany’s family members.

Swift also took to the stage to sing some of her songs.”—PTI

Taylor Swift gives emotional maid-of-honour speech at wedding

Los Angeles — Miss Colombia Ariadna Gutierrez will be making her film debut with “XXx: 3 The Return of Xander Cage”.

The 22-year-old beauty queen known for being mistakenly crowned Miss Universe by Steve Harvey last year, has been cast as Vin Diesel’s love interest, reported Variety.

The movie is currently being shot in Toronto and the Dominican Republic. Produced by Revolution Studios, Roth Kischchenbaum Films and Diesel’s One Race Film, is directed by D J Caruso.

Samuel L Jackson, Ruby Rose, Nina Dobrev, Donnie Yen, Conor McGregor, Deepika Padukone and Tony Jaa also star in the film slated to release on 20 January next year.—PTI

Miss Colombia to Play Diesel’s love interest in ‘XXx’ sequel

Stevie Wonder honoured with Global Green Hero award

Los Angeles — Veteran singer Stevie Wonder was honoured with Global Green Hero award at the 13th Annual Global Green USA pre-Oscar party.

The 65-year-old music icon, who was joined onstage by his two sons, was presented with award, which he in turn presented back to his sons as a gesture to “encourage their generation to care about the planet,” reported People magazine.

“We have to love our planet, we have to want to make it more green. We have to make sure that we can sustain the planet and make sure that people are able to survive as it has always been meant to be,” Wonder said.

The Grammy-winning singer also performed a nine-song set of his greatest hits also pointed out that climate change and its environmental impact are issues that he has always been invested in.

“I’ve always been passionate about it but obviously as time has gone and I’ve been blessed to live some minutes in life, I’ve had the opportunity to see the changes in the weather.

“And to those who think that in a normal climate, when it’s the reverse to what it’s supposed to be, then there’s something wrong with them,” he said.

Wonder then donated his harmonica to Global Green to auction off, adding, “One that has a lot of spit in it, so you can raise money for a good cause.”—PTI

Rolling Stones announce historic free concert in Havana

HAVANA — The Rolling Stones will perform a free outdoor concert in Havana on 25 March, the band announced on Tuesday, a milestone event in a country where the communist government once banned the group’s music as an “ideological deviation.”

The band added the Concert for Amity show — likely to be the biggest rock concert ever staged in Cuba — to a Latin American tour that had been due to end on 17 March in Mexico City. The performance will come three days after US President Barack Obama is due to conclude a visit to Cuba, the first by an American president since 1928.

Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro announced in December 2014 they would seek to normalise relations after more than half a century of Cold War animosity.

The concert, which will be filmed, is set to take place on fields surrounding Havana’s Ciudad Deportiva, a 26-hectare (64-acre) sports complex. It will mark the first open-air concert in Cuba by a British rock band, the group said.

“We have performed in many special places during our long career but this show in Havana is going to be a landmark event for us and, we hope, for all our friends in Cuba too,” the band said in a statement accompanied by an image of its four current members — Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood.

After the 1959 revolution that brought Fidel Castro, Raul’s brother, to power the Caribbean nation censured the group formed in London in 1962, as well as the Beatles and Elvis Presley.

Fidel Castro ultimately lamened the music censorship and attended the unveiling of a statue of late former Beatle John Lennon in a Havana park on the 20th anniversary of his death on 8 December 2000.

“I very much regret not having known you before,” Castro said during the ceremony.

At the statue on Tuesday, tour guide Julio Garcia reacted with joy to the news of the Stones’ visit, which was filtering out slowly on the island.

“Los Rolling in Cuba? Wow!” he said. “We have been waiting for them here for many years.”—Reuters

British veteran rockers The Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger sings next to band member Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts during a concert on their “Latin America Ole Tour” in Santiago, Chile on 3 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Yosemite changes famous names; Ahwahnee sign stolen amid legal fight

LOS ANGELES — Visitors to Yosemite National Park were greeted on Tuesday with an unfamiliar name for the park’s most iconic hotel on Tuesday as a bitter legal battle over its trademarked name raged on, while thieves made off with a sign for the famed Ahwahnee before it could be changed.

The Ahwahnee Hotel, which was built in 1927, and other popular sites such as Curry Village were stripped of the monikers they held for decades after the park’s longtime concessionaire, Delaware North Company, lost the lucrative contract to operate hotels and other commercial sites in the park to competitor Aramark. Delaware North sued the National Park Service in September, claiming that it no longer has an association with Yosemite.

Delaware North says it was required to buy Yosemite trademarks to get those up,” Yosemite spokesman Scott Gediman said. The National Park Service on Friday filed a petition with the US Patent and Trademark office challenging the trademarks now that Delaware North no longer has an association with Yosemite, Gediman said. Delaware North says it was required to buy Yosemite’s so-called intellectual property when it was first awarded the concessions contract in 1993 and trademarked the names as a routine business practice.

Meanwhile, park rangers were investigating the apparent theft over the weekend of a small round sign for the Ahwahnee Hotel, formerly fastened to a stone pillar on the entrance to the lodge. Gediman said the sign disappeared late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, though it was not yet clear if the crime was related to the name-change controversy. The thieves would faces federal charges, he said. Last month three members of the California Assembly introduced legislation barring the state from awarding concessions to any company seeking such trademarks.—Reuters

Fifty shades of gray (or more): gene for graying hair identified

WASHINGTON — They may not have settled the enduring debate over whether gray hair makes a person look distinguished or just plain old, but scientists have identified the first gene behind graying hair.

Researchers said on Tuesday an analysis of DNA from more than 6,300 people from five Latin American countries enabled them to pinpoint a gene that affects a person’s likelihood of getting gray hair.

The gene, called IRF4, is involved in regulating melanin, the pigment responsible for hair colour as well as the colour of the skin and eyes.

People with a certain version of the gene are predisposed to graying hair, according to University College London human geneticist Andres Ruiz-Linares, one of the researchers in the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

The researchers said hair graying is not driven exclusively by genetics, with other factors in the mix such as stress or experiencing a traumatic event.

“This is really the first study on the genetics of hair graying in humans,” University College London statistical geneticist Kaustubh Adhikari said.

Researchers combed through genetic information from men and women in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru, with a combination of European, Native American and African ancestry.

The gene variant predisposing people to early hair graying was essentially only seen in those of European ancestry. “This might, to some extent, explain why hair graying is more common in Europeans than in other populations,” Ruiz-Linares said.—Reuters
West Brom dent Leicester's title charge, Chelsea win again

LONDON — Leicester City played some brilliant attacking football and had 22 attempts on goal but dropped two vital points in their pursuit of a first Premier League title when they were held to a 2-2 draw at home by West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday.

The leaders were denied victory by a stunning free kick from Craig Gardner and while they moved three points clear of Tottenham Hotspur, Spurs will replace them in top spot if they win at West Ham on Wednesday thanks to a better goal difference.

While Leicester and Spurs are locked in hot pursuit of the title, reigning champions Chelsea continued their revival under interim coach Guus Hiddink with a third successive league win — 2-1 over relegation-threatened Norwich City.

Sunderland grabbed a point with a last minute goal to draw 2-2 with Crystal Palace while Everton pushed Aston Villa closer to relegation with a 3-1 win at Villa Park, where thousands of fans walked out in protest at the way the club is being run. At the top, Leicester, on 57 points with 10 matches to play, would have opened up a five-point gap with a win but manager Claudio Ranieri was far from despondent despite the two dropped points.

“I am very pleased with our performance,” he told the BBC.

“They played so well, there was no panic after the first goal. We played much better than against Norwich (on Saturday).”

“I want to create a lot of chances and sooner or later we score. Tonight wasn’t the right moment but we are alive and we fight to the end. Everybody is ready to fight, to play well, to create chances. Only the victory was missing.”

Leicester came close to dropping two points on Saturday before beating Norwich with a last-minute goal, but they could not repeat the trick on Tuesday.

They fell behind after 11 minutes when West Brom’s Salomon Rondon became the first player to score a league goal against them at the King Power Stadium in 2016. However, they struck back with a fortuitous deflected shot from Danny Drinkwater and went ahead with a brilliantly-executed first league goal of the season for Andy King on the stroke of halftime.

They were pegged back after 50 minutes when Gardner’s 25-metre free kick left Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel rooted to the spot. Leicester struck the woodwork twice with efforts from Jamie Vardy and Shinji Okazaki, while Leonardo Ulloa, Saturday’s match-winner against Norwich, almost grabbed another winner in the final few seconds but his effort went just wide.

Chelsea stretched their unbeaten league run to 12 match-ups since former manager Jose Mourinho left in December after a 2-1 win at Norwich, where Kenedy scored the fastest goal in the league this season, after 39 seconds, to put the visitors ahead.

The victory was secured by a second goal from Diego Costa, which looked offside, and lifted Chelsea to eighth.

Interim coach Hiddink told Sky: “We didn’t want to go into the battle but they forced us. We were sloppy in the first half, starting well with a beautiful goal and I think we could have finished it in the first half.

“We were complacent with the last pass. They made our life difficult.”

Norwich pulled a goal back through Nathan Redmond after 68 minutes but defeat saw them slide into the bottom three behind Sunderland.

Aston Villa inched closer to relegation with a 3-1 loss to Everton at Villa Park.

The fans’ protest was planned for the 74th minute, in recognition of Villa’s founding in 1874, by which time the hosts were already 3-0 down.

Villa are eight points adrift at the bottom behind Sunderland, Norwich and Newcastle United, who are all on 24.

In the night’s other match, Bournemouth beat Southampton 2-0 for their first league win over their south coast rivals since 1958.— Reuters

Atletico win 3-0 to close gap to Barcelona

MADRID — Atletico Madrid cruised to a 3-0 home win over Real Sociedad on Tuesday to close the gap behind La Liga leaders Barcelona to five points.

Barca, who can restore their eight-point advantage with a victory at Rayo Vallecano on Thursday, have 66 points from 26 games, while Atletico have played a game more.

Third-place Real Madrid, who play at Levante on Wednesday, have 54 points, while Sociedad are ninth with 34.

Atletico took the lead after eight minutes when Sociedad midfielder Diego Reyes scored an own goal trying to cut out a cross from Koke.

Diego Simeone’s side went further in front a minute into the second half when striker Luciano Vietto latched onto a poor clearance and pulled the ball back for Saul Niguez to shoot past Geronimo Rulli.

Atletico completed their biggest home win in the league this season when Antoine Griezmann converted a 61st-minute penalty against his former club, after the Frenchman had been brought down by Alberto de la Bella.

The visitors came closest to pulling one back when Jonathas headed against the post two minutes later after being set up by Ruben Pardo.

Atletico defender Diego Godin, Griezmann and Vietto all missed other chances in a one-sided first half.— Reuters

Young ‘fools’ behind Kenya doping woes — Rudisha

MELBOURNE — Kenya’s doping problems were caused by “foolish” young athletes desperate to win races and cash in on the sport, David Rudisha said on Wednesday, but the Olympic 800m champions hope his country is on the right track to restoring its reputation.

The 27-year-old, who lit up the 2012 London Games with a brilliant world record performance in the 800m final, has been distressed by the allegations of doping and corruption that have rockied the East African country’s athletics programme.

Rudisha has been hugely successful in middle and long-distance running for decades and remains a global leader on the track and in big marathons, but some 40 of its athletes have been banned for doping in the last three years.

The World Anti-Doping Agency has given the country an April deadline to implement new anti-doping measures or risk non-compliance, which could pave the way for a ban on its track and field athletes competing at the Rio Olympics.— Reuters

First world traditional martial arts championships to be held in Vietnam

HO CHI MINH CITY — The first world traditional martial arts championships will take place in Vietnam’s Ho Chi Minh City from 24-30 July, the World Federation of Vietnamese Traditional Martial Arts (WFVV) said yesterday.

The week-long event is expected to attract over 800 participants from over 30 countries and regions, including France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Algeria.

The WFVV was established in 2015, with the first term of its organizing committee comprising of 56 members from 30 countries and regions where Vietnamese martial arts are popular.

Vietnamese martial arts are being taught and practiced in at least 45 countries around the world, attracting millions of practitioners.— Xinhua